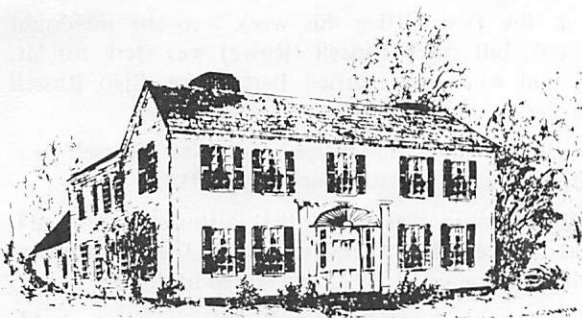




The Bethel Courier.

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Bethel Historical Society

BETHEL'S POSTAL HISTORY

Editor's Note: Ida M. Packard (1893-1971) was for many years the postmistress at Bethel and was active in the Bethel Historical Society from its founding in 1966 to her death in 1971. In September 1967, she presented a paper on the Bethel area postal history to the infant Society, a portion of which appears below. Additions have been made in references to places and personnel to bring them up to date.

POSTMASTERS

The Bethel Post Office was established on January 5, 1815, and the first postmaster, Dr. Moses Mason, Jr. lived in the house, at the corner of Mason and Broad Street owned by Ada Durell (now the Museum and Society headquarters). The post office changed several times, always remaining within a quarter of a mile from the original location.

In a book that I have on the U.S. Postal Service, it states that, "Except for a few larger centers, the postmaster carried out his responsibility from his home or more generally the building in which he both kept store and raised his family. Most of the early postmasters were store-keepers. Their places of business were the community centers. Usually every member of a postmaster's family was involved in running his postal affairs as well as his business".

I am assuming this was the case in the Bethel area.

The Successors to Dr. Mason were:

O'Neil W. Robinson, December 27, 1833. Vicinity of Straw house and Library sold to Robert A. Chapman. (Now the Elms of Bethel Inn).

Robert A. Chapman, June 17, 1835. Same as the above "The Elms".

William Frye, March 31, 1846. Office corner of Main and Broad Streets. Lived in buildings above Dr. Young's, (1980 Ray Moran's, Broad Street). He wasn't around village, seldom seen, except in his home.

Thomas E. Twitchell, June 22, 1849.

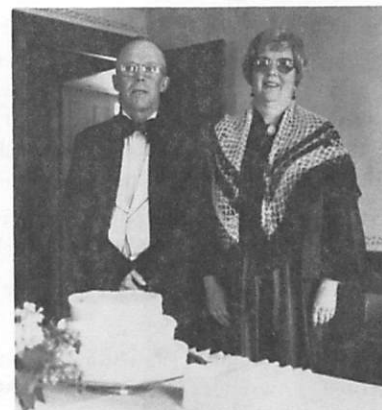
William F. Merrill, January 9, 1850.

Thomas E. Twitchell, April 19, 1850.

Sylvester Robertson, January 7, 1852. Main Street.

Richard A. Frye, April 11, 1853. Son of William, built

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MOSES MASON BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED

As part of the Faye Taylor Memorial Art Show, the Society sponsored a celebration May 25 of the 191st birthday of Dr. Moses Mason. The event featured a portrayal of Doctor and Mrs. Mason by Society members, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Perkins, (above). Mr. Perkins is a descendant of Capt. Hugh Mason who also was an ancestor of Dr. Mason. An impressive birthday cake was made by Society member Diane S. Howe for the occasion. The membership was invited to the party and encouraged to wander about the house much as guests would have done in Dr. Mason's day. In keeping with the art show theme artists (Sue Wight, Helen Morton, Donald Bennett and Carol Gersen) were stationed in the various rooms sketching and a quilting demonstration was conducted by Mrs. Nell Valentine. The weather was sunny and bright and the guests enjoyed renewing old acquaintances, making new ones at this most festive occasion, which will become a regular feature of the Museum's program.

1981 CALENDAR AVAILABLE

The 1981 Bethel Historical Society calendar commemorates the bicentennial of what has been called New England's Last Indian Raid which occurred at Bethel on August 3, 1781. On the cover is a photograph of the 1881 celebration and each month features a view of the 1931 festivities. The back cover contains a brief history of the Indian Raid and its celebrations. The calendar is again available at \$2.50 at the Moses Mason Museum or \$3.00 post paid. The supply is limited so call early to reserve one or write the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

house in 1856, Dr. Young's, Broad Street. (Perhaps the Post Office was in his father's law office).

Newton Swift, March 24, 1857. Where Bosserman's store is (barbershop end) (1980 Prim's).

Daniel A. Twitchell, May 6, 1861. Brown's Variety Store.

Abner Davis, July 13, 1863. Corner Store. (Came from Berlin).

Melville C. Kimball, May 6, 1865. Chapman House.

Enoch Foster, Jr., January 6, 1868. Lived where Charles Merrill home is. The post office may have been in law office which is now back part of library.

Leander Barker, March 24, 1869. Lived in the house where Jesse Chapman lives, Main Street (now 1980 Mother's) but I think I was told the post office was where the barber shop is now -- Bosserman's.

Samuel R. Shehan, May 28, 1869. Located this side of corner upper Main Street. I was told they used a drum shaped affair lettered at the top with cords hanging down and mail put under the cord (like a card rack) and the patrons turned the rack around to see if they had any mail.

(In this period there were two papers which came into town. Those for Col. Edwards and Major Grover).

Leander T. Barker, June 27, 1877. I presume the barber shop location.

O'Neil R. Hastings, August 19, 1885. Brother to Tom and Bill. George Lawrence Jewelry Shop, Main Street (1980 site of Annie Hastings garage).

George H. Brown, September 12, 1889. Bosserman's.

Gilman P. Bean, April 15, 1890 to 1893. Corner Main and Church. Alice Capen remembers getting mail there.

Goodwin R. Wiley, June 8, 1893. The office at the time being graded in the 4th class. It was during his administration that the office was placed in the Presidential class. It was said he changed politics to get the job. He had the part built on the side of the drugstore where the post office remained so many years in the same location; it was enlarged some time later.

In a March 4, 1896 volume of "Bethel News", Postmaster Wiley had two full pouches of letters and nine sacks of papers to distribute Wednesday evening. He did it in a remarkably short pace of time. Schedule of trains: East 3:31 9:21 5:40; West 10:23 4:32 7:59."

(Miss Nellie Frost who later married Arthur Wiley was a clerk in the Post Office.)

(Grace Carter worked in the 1890's as a clerk.)

Jarvis C. Billings, August 8, 1898, reappointed in 1902. During his administration, Rural Free Delivery was established in Bethel of which it was a center. There were five dispatches and four arrivals of mail each day except Sunday.

From an August 17, 1898 "Bethel News", Jarvis C. Billings who was the choice of the people for postmaster for this town at the late caucus received appointment from the President, August 9. There were several candidates for the position and not long ago, a caucus was held at which time the friends of all candidates participated. Mr. Billings received the most votes at that time. In a May 24, 1899

issue, I noticed that "Miss Alice Billings is assisting her father in the Post Office this week", so she no doubt helped out, but Alice Russell (Rowe) was clerk for Mr. Billings and when she married Bert Rowe, Cleo Russell became clerk.

Mr. Billings died in office and Cleo Russell was appointed acting Postmaster August 18, 1913.

G. L. Thurston was appointed Postmaster April 24, 1914, and served eight years after which Cleo Russell was appointed December 14, 1922 and served until 1935.

Arthur Herrick was appointed Postmaster February 11, 1935.

I was appointed acting postmaster October 1, 1944 and postmaster, May 8, 1945. In 1938, all postmasters 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class were under competitive Civil Service (4th class Postmaster had been previously). Presidential postmaster's positions are filled on the basis of and through the medium of Civil Service procedure. I retired in March, 1963, and Earlon Paine was appointed Postmaster. "Bud" came in the office as a temporary clerk in 1946 and became a regular clerk in 1951.

The location of the Post Office was in Wiley's block (1980 Prim's) from 1893 to 1941 until it went across the street for a short time, (site of present Bethel Savings Bank) then Harold Chamberlin was awarded the lease in 1942 in the Naimey buildings on Main Street. The Chamberlins sold to the Greigs in 1955. Facilities were improved and modernized some years ago by replacement of the old call boxes and additions of new post office boxes.

R.F.D. SERVICE

R.F.D. #1

1st carrier, James S. Hutchins. September 15, 1903 to August 31, 1913. His route was from the village, including Chandler Hill almost to Locke Mills to East Bethel, Middle Intervale back to Bethel. He was said to have the longest route in the State. After Hanover route was discontinued, he was obliged to extend his route there. He was paid \$600.00 but later received \$750.00 a year. He was not allowed to use a car (too dangerous for government mail) when they first came out but used a pair of horses and sometimes three. He was several times a State delegate to National Postal Convention, once as far away as Little Rock, Arkansas, which was quite a jaunt in those days.

(I obtained this information from his daughter, Dorothy Fortier).

Leslie D. Brown had the route from September 2, 1913 to February 14, 1914. Robert Sanborn from February 16, 1914 to June 30, 1944. His substitutes were Cary Stevens and later Richard Stevens. Later mailmen were Earl Davis, Clayton Bane, and Lawrence Winslow, Sr.

R.F.D. #2

R.F.D. #2 was established on February 1, 1904, with Charles E. Valentine, carrier. Mrs. Valentine served as substitute for some time and Carroll assisted. Mr. Valentine's first car was a Schaeht (Shart), it was ordered by mail and came by freight to Bethel -- hauled from the station and assembled by Mr. Valentine and Carroll. It was a 2 cylinder-chain drive. He used this until he bought a Model T Ford with special body.

I believe there was a government ruling after a while about members of the family being substitutes so Adrian Grover took Mrs. Valentine's place as a substitute.

When R.F.D. #4 and R.F.D. #2 were combined after Mr. Valentine retired, Albert Silver was appointed and served until 1958 when he retired after thirty years of service.

Gard Bennett was a substitute on R.F.D. #2 and also Fred Grover. Clayton Bane was appointed carrier on R.F.D. #2 when Mr. Silver retired, but changed to R.F.D. #1 when Mr. Davis retired. Ronald Kendall became carrier on R.F.D. #2 temporarily April 27, 1963 to March 14, 1964 when he then became a regular carrier.

Harry E. Plaisted was the first carrier on R.F.D. #3, November 15, 1904 to April 30, 1914.

Ray York was a substitute and sometimes went on his bicycle to rest his horse.

E. C. Van Den Kerckhoven served from June 22, 1914 until he died in 1927.

William Van Den Kerckhoven worked from February 1, 1924 to April 7, 1927.

Alton Payne served from December 30, 1926 to October 8, 1927. These are conflicting dates, so I presume they were substitutes.

Earl Davis was appointed October 10, 1927 and continued to March 1, 1945. The route was discontinued on February 28, 1945. Earl received his appointment following Mr. Van's death. He started his route with a Model T Ford and used a snowboat for several winters. He was carrier on Route 1, number 3 and number 1 were combined after Robert Sanborn retired.

Gerard Eames was substitute on Route #3.

Donald Brown was a substitute on Route #1.

R.F.D. #4 was established November 15, 1904 and George Bennett had it until December 15, 1904. Then Henry Verrill was appointed and continued until his death. John Anderson and Clyde Whitman were substitutes. Albert Silver was appointed March 19, 1928 and served until August 31, 1932 when the route was discontinued and Albert was transferred to R.F.D. #2 and #4 and #2 were combined. Also involved here was, Adrian Grover who later went on R.F.D. #2 as a substitute.

R.F.D. Service was a big factor in the postal service. It was a common thing to hear patrons in the rural section say the R.F.D. carrier was often the only person over the road and they sometimes used snowshoes to deliver the mail to some patrons after a storm.

STAR ROUTE BETHEL TO HANOVER

Information from Ernest Holt, Hanover.

Frank Flint was the first carrier - fall of 1924 until July 1925.

Horace Littlefield - 1925-1929.

Wesley Wheeler - 1929-1933.

Ross Knapp - 1933-1941.

In 1937, Sunday River was added to this Star Route. Mrs. Edna York - 1941-1945.

Wesley Wheeler - 1945-until he retired.

John Harrington substituted for Wesley until Ted Dunham was appointed and served until he died April 13, 1962.

Mary Paine carried the mail until Roger Mills, Sr. was appointed and he is still carrying the mail. (1972-1980). His successors were Edith J. Fleet and John Swasey (1980-).

An interesting recollection from Mr. Holt:

The petition for the service initiated by George Virgin was circulated. The main argument used was that during spring and fall and high water, citizens couldn't get across the river at Hanover. Ernest recalled the inspector came and inquired of him and another man who were cutting the bushes on the highway where George Virgin lived. The inspector couldn't have arrived at a better time. A heavy rain had fallen and the river was at flood stage. The morning he came to Hanover, the water had receded enough at the Major Hasting's place so he got through, but it was still over the road between Hanover and Rumford Point. The ferry at Hanover was wrecked -- a new boat was built the following year and the ferry at Rumford Point was not operating due to high water. Evidently, the inspector felt we were in a "depressed area" as he was here the latter part of September and the mail service began in October of that year, 1924.

Theodore Dunham began his service as Star Route carrier to Lewiston in 1933 and continued in that capacity for more than twenty-five years. He had the route until the Metro System started in 1960 when the trains were discontinued. Mr. Dunham's first automobile was a 1931 Ford. He carried the mail in boats and on snowshoes as well as by car. The boat episode was in the year of the big flood and took place at Snow Falls about midway to South Paris. The postmaster from South Paris met him there. He carried the mail into Oxford village on snowshoes when the roads were blocked -- about a mile from the main road.

In 1960, the Star Route was taken over by Robert and Carl Hakola who have operated the service since then from Auburn to West Bethel.

CRAFT COMMITTEE FORMED

Recent action by the Board of Trustees of the Society resulted in the creation of a craft committee whose responsibility it is to plan and carry on craft programs and presentations within the museum. Any member wishing to serve on this committee should let the Society Director know.

Published quarterly by the Bethel Historical Society, Stanley R. Howe, Editor. Please address all inquiries and suggestions to Editor, Bethel Historical Society Newsletter, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

SOCIETY HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Bethel Historical Society was held at the Dr. Moses Mason House this month. A potluck supper preceded the meeting.

Various committees were heard. The nominating committee, consisting of Arlene Brown, Suzanne Fiske and Harry Kuzyk, chairman, reported the following slate of officers: president Catherine Newell; vice president, Donald G. Bennett; secretary, Edith Eaton Eddy; treasurer, E. Louise Lincoln; trustee for three years, Helen Morton. It was voted by the membership to accept the report of the nominating committee.

President Catherine Newell expressed the gratitude of the society for the long record of service by retiring trustee Suzanne Fiske. She also noted the passing of the first president of the society, Charles Heywood.

President Newell and Vice President Bennett reviewed the record of the society since the last annual meeting. This included, membership growth of 101 to 390 members including 19 life members, another \$50,000 added to the endowment from the William Bingham II Trust for Charity, a Maine history course offered for the first time, the visitation of over 2,000 students and adults to the museum, the hosting of the annual meeting of Maine Citizens for Historic Preservation, the formation of an art committee and several exhibitions, the awarding of the Dr. Moses Mason Award to Teri Lee Blake for her essay on local history, the publication of the society's cookbook and the sale of over 600 copies, the presentation of a special program commemorating the centennial of the Bethel Library Association, the holding of the annual volunteers dinner, the presentation once again of "Gould Through the Years" during Alumni Weekend, sponsorship of Sudbury Canada Days, the undertaking of a genealogical survey, assembling a political memorabilia exhibit, a successful Moses Mason birthday party and Faye Taylor Memorial Art show, record attendance at meetings, a successful annual Heritage Day, sponsorship of a film and lecture series during July and August, the receipt of a grant to survey Oxford County buildings and sites from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the hiring of George Allen as project director, the continuation of the indexing of the Bethel Citizen by James Haskell on a voluntary basis, the contributions of three senior project Gould Academy students in surveying Bethel's architecture and in archival organization.

Also the daily volunteer work by Phyllis Hunt Roberts as museum registrar and typist, the selection of the society director as a participant in the Seminar for Historical Administration at Colonial Williamsburg, the exhibit of A. D. Shattuck's painting "Sunset at Bethel", on loan from Vassar College, the raising of nearly \$700 in the annual endowment campaign, the donation of articles from 56 individuals, the receipt of second prize for the float in Newry's 175th anniversary celebration and third prize for the costumes of Dr. and Mrs. Mason, the loss due to death of members Ruth Grover, Sidney Davidson, Edward Hanscom, Richard Waldron Sr., Libbie Kneeland, Paul Head and Dorothy K. Truman.

The program featured slides of old photographs collected during the past year as well as some of the society's activities for the same period.

Following the program, two cakes were served, the gift of Lt. Gen. and Mrs. James D. Alger, (USA-Rtd).

IN MEMORIAM

Died, May 11, 1980, Paul B. Head, generous donor and long-time member. Mr. Head, spoke to the Society on his native West Bethel in June, 1967, recalling many amusing and interesting anecdotes.

Died, July 1, 1980, Dorothy K. Truman, devoted Society member, was a summer resident of Songo Pond.

Died, July 13, 1980, Charles E. Heywood, first president of the Society and generous donor.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

New life members of the Society since the last issue of the Courier are:

Mrs. Katheryn M. Eames, former town clerk of Bethel, who now lives in Cape Elizabeth.

Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Ellis, who are retired, live in Oxford.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Conary, Bog Road, Gilead. Mr. Conary is associated with the investment firm of Shearson, Loeb, Rhodes, Inc. Mrs. Conary is on the standing committee of the Maine Historical Society.

Dr. and Mrs. John W. Trinward, Bethel. Dr. Trinward has been a dentist in Bethel for over 25 years and his wife, Margaret has long been active in community affairs.

Elizabeth Whiteman, lives in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania and is a graduate of Gould Academy.

William M. Throop, Jr., New Canaan, Connecticut. Mr. Throop is a lawyer associated with the firm of Davidson, Dawson and Clark, New York and a trustee of Gould Academy.

NEW MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES — HELEN A. MORTON, TRUSTEE.

Born in Auburn, Helen A. Morton graduated from Edward Little High School and Farmington State Teachers College. She taught in the Auburn elementary schools for six years before her marriage to Herbert Morton, Jr. of Newry in 1939. Since that time she has been a resident of Newry and substituted in the Bethel schools from 1944 to 1970. Mrs. Morton has studied art with Professor Lajos Matolcsy in South Paris intermittently for sixteen years and is accomplished in all media. She has exhibited her work in banks, libraries, hospitals, hotels, shops and sidewalk shows. She has also been accepted in juried shows. A member of the Western Maine Art Group and the Waldoboro Gallery Association, she is active in the West Parish Congregational Church, Purity Chapter, O.E.S. and the Newry Mother's Club. The mother of two children and grandmother of three, she has been widowed since 1964. Mrs. Morton has served for a number of years on the Society's program committee and was recently appointed to the newly formed Art Committee. She has also served faithfully as a museum guide since the Museum opened in 1974, and was elected as a trustee at the annual meeting this month.

BOOK REVIEW

Stuart F. Martin, *New Pennacook Folks*, (Rumford Point, Maine; 1980) 494 pp., hardcover, \$19.00.

Stuart F. Martin's *New Pennacook Folks*, like Eva Bean's *East Bethel Road*, which it mirrors in style and chapter organization, was written to bring up to date the activities and the genealogies of Rumford's first white settlers. The book tends to concentrate on people and places of settlement that existed before Hugh J. Chisholm's founding of major industrialization at "Rumford Falls" in the early 1890's. Mr. Martin who lives in Rumford Point, states in his Introduction, that he is concerned "where these early families settled, how they lived and . . . their interesting and productive accomplishments."

A great deal of time and effort has gone into the work, including many years spent updating the family genealogies in William B. Lapham's *History of Rumford* (1890). That Mr. Martin considers the Lapham *History* a "masterpiece," however, suggests that more time spent in perusal of many of the excellent new histories of Maine towns, as well as a substantial number of the town histories that appeared in Mr. Lapham's own day, might have aided in the writing, arrangement, and analysis of material here.

As one who served for years as Vice-President of the Greater Rumford Area Historical Society, and is presently working on an article for the New Hampshire Historical Society on Rumford's Granite State origins, this reviewer would like to have seen much better use of the eighteenth century records of New Pennacook uncovered some time ago at the State Historical Society in Concord. Though Mr. Martin considers these records to be non-existent for the first thirty families in Rumford and for the earliest period of settlement, they have in fact been available for some time and might have added much to this new volume.

Nevertheless, *New Pennacook Folks* succeeds quite often in its intended purpose. Some delightful stories are presented in relation to Rumford's early town meetings, country stores, taverns, stage lines, ferries, bridges (perhaps a bit too much on that at Rumford Point), and steamboating ventures. A section of interesting biographies and the extensive biographical information in genealogical form are especially valuable. The maps in "The Land and The Homes" section, though roughly drawn and occasionally difficult to read, are a convenient reference to the more than four hundred homes Mr. Martin traces from their origins to their present ownership.

Conscious of the effort that went into the publication of this and other such histories, this reviewer has only one major complaint regarding *New Pennacook Folks*, and that involves the lack of editorial polish in the book. Though such things as the misplacement of the copyright on the title page and of the frontispiece photo after the Preface seem minor, they could easily have been corrected. There is no dedication and there is no list of illustrations, though the book has many. A statement in the rear that four sections have not been indexed is made without explanation. Surely the two-page inclusion of Franklin Plantation's history deserved indexing.

The endpapers of *New Pennacook Folks* include a drawing that shows the Androscoggin Bridge at Rumford Point, as it appeared in the 1830's soon after construction.

According to a contemporary engraving of the bridge reprinted in the 1975 edition of Reverend Daniel Gould's *History of Rumford* (1826), Mr. Martin's portrayal is quite accurate; yet on page 52, he states, "Little is known about the type of construction of the bridge." This kind of error might have been avoided by a more careful proof-reading.

All in all, this new history of a portion of Rumford has much to offer the reader. While it fails to provide an all-encompassing history of the town, it does quite well in publishing material not readily available anywhere else. Stuart Martin deserves much credit for collecting and publishing such a wide and varied amount of information on his town's early families.

Randall H. Bennett



Antique Show During Sudbury Canada Days — The antique show held at the barn of Lt. General & Mrs. James D. Alger's was a popular event of the two day Sudbury Canada Days sponsored by the Society August 16-17. Other events included a children's parade around the common, craft demonstrations, historical film series, Tom Sawyer fence painting contest, tour of 18th century sites in Bethel, a slide presentation on Bethel's architectural heritage, an old fashioned church service, a commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the construction of the East Bethel Church and an old time concert at Middle Intervale Meeting House. Over four hundred attended the festivities which will become an annual event every August.

Sudbury Canada was the original name of Bethel before it was incorporated on June 10, 1796 following settlement in 1774.

EDITOR'S CORNER

The appearance of this issue marks the beginning of the *Courier* as a quarterly which was accomplished by affecting economies in printing and will be an additional bonus of membership. The newsletter is now scheduled to appear in December, March, June and September and will provide additional opportunities for more Society news as well as historical articles. As always, the quality and interest level depends upon its readers. If anyone has any comments, suggestions or contributions for it, please let me know.

Editor's Note: This article marks the first in a series on Bethel area hotels by Donald G. Bennett, Society Vice-President.

BETHEL'S HOTELS

Hotels, inns, public houses, taverns, boarding houses and of more recent years motels have always played an important role in the economic and cultural development of a community. Bethel is no different. The shape and flavor of Bethel today has been largely influenced by the continuing existence of public accommodations in its economic structure. Through a series of articles in the "Courier" about the history of Bethel's lodging places, this column will attempt to trace the history of some of the more memorable establishments and show their contributions to the town's development and to people's attitudes.

It may be surprising to some but wayside inns and taverns have flavored our literary heritage from as long ago as the Middle Ages. Thus, almost subconsciously through our normal schooling, our literature has provided us with certain information about inns and lodgings as well as the role these facilities play in a community, in a drama or in a story. Such well known names as Chaucer, Shakespeare and Longfellow have used the wayside inn as a key literary prop in plays, tales and poems that derive their action from the mingling together of transient people of mixed personalities. Out of this mixture of personalities has come some of our most easily recalled literature, such as the character of Falstaff, and this drawing together of different, transient people has continued to add strength to the hotel's "raison d'être". That reason to be for the owner is profit but it also adds to the community's economic engines that puff away much faster when new money is fueling their fires — strengthening the town's ability to sustain an acceptable, visible, pleasing image for its residents.

Bethel's first hotel, Bethel House, in 1833 seems to completely fit the various aspects of the foregoing pattern. Besides being on the main route from the White Mountains to points south and east, thus important to travelers, Bethel House satisfied the community's needs for a public house -- for social activities and to serve for a short time as a classroom for the beginnings of Bethel's secondary school.

Historically, Bethel House was created clearly as a part of Bethel's and not Sudbury Canada's developmental period. Whereas the Sudbury Canada settlers were for the most part young men in their early 20's, Jedediah Burbank, the town's first innkeeper, was 49, a Justice of the Peace and a prosperous farmer who was ready to invest in some enterprise beyond simply his farm's expansion.

According to various sources, Burbank, who was born in Bradford, Massachusetts in 1784, had moved with his family in 1802 to a farm in Gilead. As a measure of wealth, the records note that the Burbanks brought with them six oxen and two horses. In November, 1803, before he was 20 years old, Jedediah Burbank married Alma Esther Clark, a daughter of Jonathan Clark of Indian Raid fame. After their wedding, the newlyweds moved in with the Clarks. But by 1826, this second generation of Burbanks in Bethel had become well established socially and financially. In 1826, they decided to build a new house. Their farm was

apparently doing well, life was relatively easy going, along with, probably, an accumulation of some wealth. As to why the Burbanks decided to build a public house, it is mostly a matter of speculation because all of the family records were lost when their house later burned. So, any diaries that might have shed some first hand light on what motivated the judge to build a hotel are not available to researchers. Only one clue survived. According to a published letter from Mrs. Lydia (Frost) Cozad who had been a close friend of Mrs. Burbank, the judge decided to build Bethel House to please his wife; she was anxious to stimulate more social activity, it seems, no doubt for her own entertainment and for her friends who had little to do outside of house parties.

Anyway, in 1833, Edmund Merrill began constructing the first Bethel House for Jedediah Burbank about where the Opera House is today, overlooking the Common. In a 1912 "Historical" column in the Oxford County Citizen, Leonard Chapman records that Bethel House was adjacent to the Eleazor Twitchell house known as the "Castle".

Again, from various accounts, a narrative picture of the Bethel House emerges that shows it to have been quite a formidable building. It started out as a two story building but eventually grew to three stories. It was a large square house. There was an impressive hall on the second floor. An ell in the rear contained the kitchen and woodshed. Along the entire front of the building was an open porch which became a two story porch when the third floor was added in 1848. Notes indicate that one could view the broad expanse of common from the front of Bethel House including the town pump which was also in full view. A dining room extended across the entire back of the second floor. The ground floor accommodated vehicles. Thus, situated as it was on the slope of Mill Hill, one can visualize how the building's design took the slope into account by providing carriage space in a partly graded piece of ground above which, supported on heavy posts, was the main or second floor of the public house. An outside set of stairs connected the second floor with the ground. And at one point the ell may have been extended to connect with the "Castle".

The first Bethel hotel lasted until 1865 when it was destroyed in the great fire which swept through that entire section of Bethel Hill. During its time it undoubtedly witnessed some unforgettable occasions. The first terms of Gould's Academy were held in the second floor hall. Judge Burbank occasionally held court sessions in the hall. Court cases must have drawn good crowds because once the crowd's size and weight was more than the floor could support. Suddenly during the session, the floor gave way into the livery area below with unrecorded results.

Bethel House lasted fourteen years after the railroad came through Bethel. Therefore, one can assume that business prospered with the influx of transients and new stimulants for local business. Further evidence of the impact of Bethel House on Bethel came in a newspaper editorial comment after the fire in late April, 1865. The comment questioned whether or not, because of the loss of the town's hotel, Bethel would be prevented from continuing as a resort town.

However, the fire was not Burbank's loss. He had sold the hotel a year or two after building it. William F.

Lovejoy, a name frequently connected with Bethel's innkeeping of the time, owned Bethel House in 1865. In 1865, Burbank had sold his new hotel to Ezra T. Russell. Russell had built a house on a lot approximately where the Bethel Inn is today, located on the south east corner of the Common. In exchange for Bethel House, Burbank took over Russell's new home. Later, some accounts indicate that Burbank deeded Bethel House to John Harris. Harris was the store owner in the same block whose misfortune it was to have the great fire of 1865 start in the barn at the rear of his store. Burbank apparently retired to his farm, letting his investments flourish without further personal involvement in the innkeeping trade. Others were attracted to Bethel because of the first inn's success and because of the railroad's growth as an artery for vacationers to reach the uplands and escape summer's urban heat.

As an epilogue to part one of this series, one can see now that the grand opening of Bethel House marked a new era in the economic and social development of Bethel Hill. One interpretation of Bethel's development has focused on the railroad's influence as causing the town's center of gravity to shift from Middle Intervale to Bethel Hill. But Burbank's venture, along with those of the Twitchells, nearly 20 years before the arrival of rail transportation, shows that the Bethel Hill and Mill Brook section were already in the 1830's a major counterweight to the governmental activities in Middle Intervale. In economic terms, the arrival of a hotel on the scene signaled a departure from a pioneer, subsistence economy whose industrial development was up to that time devoted largely to secondary processing -- milling grain into flour and sawing logs into lumber. The hotel converted leisure dollars into profit for its original owner and investor.

WHITE MOUNTAIN COURSE TO BE OFFERED AGAIN IN OCTOBER

Once more the ever popular White Mountain Course will again be offered by the Society. This time it will be held entirely during the month of October, with sessions on the history by Stanley R. Howe, Director, Bethel

Historical Society; the flora and fauna of the area by Donald Feeney, Gould Academy; collecting White Mountain memorabilia by Douglas Philbrook, manager, Mount Washington Summit Road Company, White Mountain literature by Walter W. Wright, retired head of Special Collections and Rare Books, Dartmouth College Library. The course will also include the traditional meal at Philbrook Farm Inn, a historic White Mountain institution still being operated by the same family since 1861.



SUMMER HOUSE PRESERVED

The summer house at the former home of Samuel D. Philbrook was moved to the grounds of the Moses Mason Museum on August 25, by a crew organized by Society member Arlan Jodrey, shown above driving his truck hauling the structure. The summer house, believed by Society member Ernestine Philbrook Jackson to have been built by her grandfather Samuel D. Philbrook in 1895, is currently undergoing restoration and will be a valued addition to the grounds of the museum. Special thanks in the moving and restoration are in order to Arlan Jodrey, Mike Jodrey, Stanley Lord, Donald Bennett, Robert Belanger, Floyd Thurston, E.M. Quinn, Edward Kennett and to L.E. Davis Lumber Company for the use of a fork lift. The structure is the gift of Society member Norris Brown of Bethel.

Join the Bethel Historical Society dedicated to preserving and interpreting the local past.

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

- | | |
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| (1) free admission to the museum | (4) special library and archival privileges |
| (2) special discounts at museum store | (5) semi-annual newsletter |
| (3) preferred rate for meeting room rental | (6) reduced course fees |
| | (7) voting rights in the Society |

To the Membership Committee: I am interested in becoming a member of the Society.
(Please Print)

Name

Address

Signature

Please check appropriate category and send your remittance to: Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217

-----Sustaining \$2.50 (Individual)

-----Contributing \$10.00

-----Patron \$25.00

-----Students (under 18 years) \$1.00

-----Life over 55 years \$50.00 single

-----Life over 55 years \$75.00 couple

-----Life under 55 years \$100.00 single

-----Life under 55 years \$150.00 couple

FAYE TAYLOR ART SHOW

Kent Taylor, director of development at Westbrook College, Portland, opened the Bethel Historical Society's Memorial Day weekend art show named in memory of his mother, Faye S. Taylor. The show inaugurates an annual series by the Moses Mason Museum in Bethel which began with over 130 exhibits.

Commenting on the exhibition Taylor said, "My mother would be especially pleased that the exhibition served as a vehicle for the talent of so many of the region's younger students of art. When my mother returned to Bethel in the early 1950's, she was struck by the need in a predominantly rural state for greater opportunities for the young people in the region to gain an awareness and appreciation for natural beauty which is so much a part of the landscape of Maine. With this in mind, she established art classes for children at her home in Kimball Park. It would have given her a great deal of satisfaction to see so many of the landscape works present in this exhibition."

In the competitive stage of the exhibition, Judith McLaughlin of West Paris won the Faye Taylor Landscape Award of \$50 presented by the Bethel Savings Bank. Paul Cook of Gould Academy won the senior level student award of \$15 presented by the Bethel Historical Society. His exhibit was a linoleum print. Karen Vitala, a second grade student at Ethel Bisbee School in Bethel, won the elementary level \$15 first prize.

Other senior winners in the student art competition were Alain Crepin, an exchange student from France at Gould Academy, and Brent Bachelder, a seventh grade student at Telstar Middle School. In the elementary level, Paul Crommett, a first grade student at Ethel Bisbee School, and Scot Stevens, a fifth grade student at Crescent Park School in Bethel, were the other winners.

1980 MOSES MASON AWARD TO TERI LEE BLAKE

The 1980 Moses Mason Award for the best essay on local history by a Gould Academy or Telstar Regional High School Student was made to Teri Lee Blake, for her essay "Twitch Horses in Oxford County". Miss Blake's research included oral as well as documentary sources. Judges for the award were Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Edmond

J. Vachon and Rosalind R. Chapman. The award, consisting of a \$100 savings bond and a handsome certificate suitable for framing, was presented at the school's annual award's ceremony in May.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

A new year for the Bethel Historical Society and Moses Mason House Museum is already underway with exciting monthly programs, a newsletter to appear quarterly, and the promise of an active year ahead.

The vitality of our organization is evidenced in the zest with which new ideas are tried — the most recent being the formation of the Music Committee and the forthcoming harpsichord concert.

The growth of the Historical Society to nearly 400 members has not been marked with complacency regarding programs and policies but has tended to foster a new spirit of adventure in the 1980's. I urge all members to catch this spirit, offer suggestions, and participate actively in our organization.

Catherine Newell

SOCIETY PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

The Society has a number of products that may be good gift ideas including:

Bethel Historical Society Cookbook, \$4.50 plus 75¢ postage and handling.

Four Season Placemats, \$6.95 plus \$1.00 postage and handling.

1981 Bethel Historical Society Calendar, \$2.50 plus 50¢ postage and handling.

Moses Mason House Tiles, \$2.50 plus 75¢ postage and handling.

Moses Mason Museum tote bag, \$7.95 plus \$1.00 postage and handling.

Moses Mason Museum T-shirts, adult sizes, \$4.00, childrens' \$3.75, plus 50¢ postage and handling.

Sudbury Canada T-shirts, adult sizes, (SML) \$5.00, children \$4.00, plus 50¢ postage and handling.

Moses Mason Museum wood carrier, \$12.50 plus \$1.50 shipping charges.

Orders should be sent to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217 or by telephone A.C. 207-824-2908.

Bethel Historical Society

Box 12

Bethel, Maine 04217